

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 04245 301020Z

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SCCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 MC-02 AID-05 ACDA-10 TRSE-00 /091 W

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P R 300937Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5041

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 4245

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, ET

SUBJECT: ERITREAN REPRESENTATIVES PLEDGE AMERICAN KIDNAP VICTIMS
WILL NOT BE HARMED

1. OCT. 28 PRESS REPORTED THAT ERITREAN REPS AHMAD NASSIR (REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL) AND UTHMAN SABBE (PLF) HAD MET PREVIOUS DAY WITH BAATH PARTY DEPSECGEN ABDULLAH AL-AHMAR, AIR FORCE COMMANDER NAJI JAMIL, AND INTERIOR MIN ALI ZAZA. DISCUSSIONS CENTERED ON "CONDITIONS IN ERITREA AND SUCCESSIVE VICTORIES ACHIEVED BY REVOLUTIONARY FORCES."

2. OCT. 29 PRESS REPORTED PRESS CONFERENCE BY "UNITED DELEGATION OF ERITREAN REVOLUTION" IN WHICH ERITREAN REPS LAUDED SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR ERITREAN GOALS, NOTING THAT FIRST SUPPLIES OF AUTOMATIC WEAPONS TO REACH REVOLUTIONARIES ARRIVED FROM SYRIA IN 1963, AND FIRST ROCKETS "LAUNCHED TO LIBERATE ERITREAN TOWNS" ALSO ORIGINATED IN SYRIA. REPS ASSERTED THAT UNIFI-
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PAGE 02 DAMASC 04245 301020Z

CATION OF VARIOUS GROUPS COMPRISING LIBERATION MOVEMENT

HAD FINALLY BEEN IMPLEMENTED AND CLAIMED THAT ERITREAN FIGHTERS NUMBER 25,000, APART FROM POPULAR MILITIA FORCES FOR WHICH NO FIGURES GIVEN.

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ABOUT ABDUCTION OF CIVILIANS, AHMAD NASSIR STATED: "PERSONS KIDNAPPED ARE NOT CIVILIANS AS ALLEGED BUT AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL WORKING AT AMERICAN BASES IN ERITREA AND PARTICIPATING WITH ETHIOPIAN FORCES IN CAMPAIGNS TO EXTERMINATE ERITREAN PEOPLE." NASSIR EMPHASIZED THAT ABDUCTIONS CARRIED OUT ONLY AFTER APPEALS TO USG TO HALT SHIPMENT OF ARMS SUPPLIES TO ETHIOPIA IGNORED. "THEREFORE WE WERE FORCED INTO THIS ACTION IN ORDER TO PREVENT SHIPMENT OF AMERICAN WEAPONS TO ETHIOPIAN REGIME." NASSIR ADDED SIGNIFICANTLY THAT ERITREAN FORCES WOULD NOT HARM ANY OF KIDNAP VICTIMS. HE CONCLUDED WITH RENEWED APPEAL TO AMERICAN TO STOP ARMS SHIPMENTS TO ETHIOPIAN MILITARY. MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CITIZEN PROTECTION, PRESS COMMENTS, KIDNAPPING, LIBERATION FRONTS, NEGOTIATIONS, PRISONERS RELEASE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975DAMASC04245
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750376-0797
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975107/aaaaafkz.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 NOV 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 NOV 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <14 JAN 2004 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ERITREAN REPRESENTATIVES PLEDGE AMERICAN KIDNAP VICTIMS WILL NOT BE HARMED
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, SY, ET
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006